

March 5, 2002

PURPOSE

This **letter of intent** documents a commitment by the State of Washington, Department of Ecology; the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency; and the U. S. Department of Energy (DOE) to accelerate Hanford Site cleanup.

Additionally, this letter of intent documents how results of the Cleanup Constraints and Challenges Team (C3T), the Top-to-Bottom Review, and other improvements will be used to:

- Accelerate cleanup,
- Develop integrated planning and funding requests, and
- Meet commitments under the Hanford Federal Facility Agreement and Consent Order (Tri-Party Agreement).

This represents a transformation in Hanford Site cleanup, with the objective of accelerating completion from a 2070 timeframe to 2035 and possibly as soon as 2025. It establishes a bias for action and continuous improvement throughout cleanup.

BACKGROUND

- The Top to Bottom Review (the Review) identified a range of Environmental Management (EM) challenges, noted many areas needing improvement, and issued several calls to action to accelerate cleanup at EM sites.
- The Administration is prepared to increase site-specific budget requests as sites demonstrate a transformational approach to accelerating cleanup with the expectation that the accelerations achieved by such near-term increases will lead to significant decreases in later years and substantially less costs to taxpayers overall.
- The C3T effort has been aggressively pursuing opportunities to accelerate the cleanup at Hanford and to make cleanup efforts more effective. This effort has to date identified 42 specific targets of opportunity for improvement and has demonstrated a mindset of continuous improvement and receptiveness to better ways to complete cleanup.
- The constructive working relationships among the C3T parties have already resulted in changes in priorities (such as those reflected in the proposed TPA change packages for the River Corridor and Central Plateau Waste Sites Cleanup milestones), strategies, work practices and commitments, and have created a framework for dealing with other issues.
- In addition, DOE has been actively engaged in fundamentally transforming how it conducts its business through contract and internal management processes at Hanford.
- The TPA was originally envisioned and has evolved as a living document, amenable to improvement as experience and new information are obtained. For example, if a new risk were discovered at the Hanford Site, we would expect the parties to take this information into consideration when updating the TPA.
- Seven specific C3T initiatives now being implemented focus on accelerated cleanup and demonstrate a transformational change to the way business is being conducted:

The Central Plateau Strategy and Vision

Accelerated Tank Waste Retrieval and Closure Demonstration

Hanford Tank Waste Treatment Strategy

Integrated Groundwater Monitoring, Assessment & Protection

Cesium/Strontium Capsule Disposition

Improved Waste Management and Accelerated Waste Disposal Options
DOE Work Practice Reform

UNDERSTANDINGS

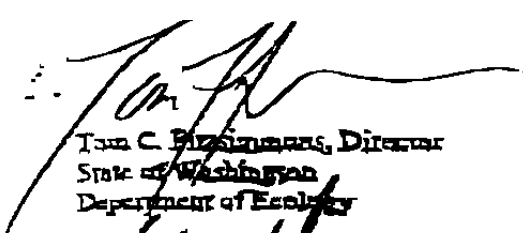
The following statements document the commitments and progress that have been made to date:

1. All Tri-Parties share a desire to fundamentally transform the project and a **vision** to accelerate risk reduction and cleanup of the Hanford Site from 2070 to 2035, and possibly as soon as 2025. Additionally, accelerated cleanup will be accomplished in a manner that is safe, protective of human health and the environment, and compliant with applicable State and Federal environmental laws.
2. DOE and its contractors bear the greatest responsibility to transform their business practices to accelerate cleanup. DOE and its contractors agree to take all necessary steps to accelerate risk reduction and to apply as large a percentage as possible of the Hanford Site's budget to accelerated cleanup as a continuing and ongoing process.
3. All Tri-Parties will be accountable for meeting their commitments. To this end, the Tri-Parties agree that accelerated cleanup and meeting our commitments are made more attainable with sufficient, stable, and predictable funding; good regulatory relationships; broad stakeholder support; and best management practices.
4. All Tri-Parties agree to consider *greatest risk first* as a principle in setting priorities and cleanup strategies, recognizing there are other factors that need to be considered including balancing risk to workers, the public, and the environment. In this regard, all Tri-Parties agree to aggressively evaluate and implement, where appropriate, the targets of opportunity for accelerated risk reduction identified by the C3T as well as actions identified by the Review.
5. The Hanford Site has presented plans for accelerated cleanup that meet the criteria for access to the Cleanup Reform Appropriation. These plans focus resources on closure and situations with the highest risk and include the following:
 - Accelerated waste retrieval and tank closure demonstration
 - Accelerated River Corridor Cleanup
 - Enhanced Waste Treatment Plant capabilities
 - Alternate Low Activity Waste form investigations
 - Accelerated plutonium deinventorying
 - Accelerated spent fuel basin cleanout
 - Improved waste management and accelerated disposal options
 - Accelerated transfer of Cesium/Strontium capsules from wet storage to passive dry storage
6. The Tri-Parties continue to value the importance of enforceable commitments to sustain progress and agree that as improvements are further demonstrated, further changes to the Tri-Party Agreement will be proposed under its existing change control processes.
7. The Tri-Parties agree that more detailed plans and action assignments will be needed to implement accelerated cleanup. As a first step to guide those efforts, DOE will develop a set of specific goals for physical progress by 2007 and 2012 that will represent a major acceleration from current plans. DOE will produce a draft work plan showing how these goals can be met by May 1, 2002, and the Tri-Parties hope to produce a mutually agreed to work plan by August 1, 2002. Changes will then be proposed to the Tri-Parties Agreement as appropriate.
8. DOE will need to develop an internal commitment that focuses EM on accelerated cleanup as well as a commitment between DOE and its prime contractors that focuses the contractors' efforts on accelerated cleanup. Both of these documents will be completed by May 1, 2002.

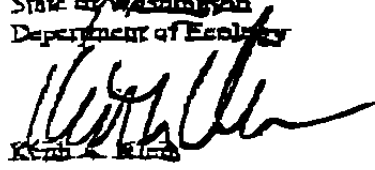
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9. DOE considers this *letter of intent*, together with achievement of the items delineated above, to meet the objectives called for in the President's fiscal year 2003 budget request for sites to reach new agreements with State and Federal regulators to help accelerate and improve cleanup performance.
10. DOE will conduct routine meetings, chaired by the Assistant Secretary, to assess the status and ensure progress of DOE support to accelerated cleanup at the Hanford Site. Summary evaluations will be provided to the Under Secretary or the Deputy Secretary.
11. The principals will continue to meet regularly (approximately quarterly) to provide the leadership needed to ensure progress, solve problems, and identify new initiatives.
12. Nothing in this letter of intent modifies any of the rights, authorities, or obligations currently stated in the Tri-Party Agreement.


We, the undersigned, are committed to work together to implement these work plan agreements and to seek additional opportunities to accelerate and improve cleanup.




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